



AGENDA

Environmental Policy Commission REGULAR MEETING

Monday, April 4, 2016

7:30 - 9:30 PM

City Hall, Room 2000 (Second Floor)

7:30 – 7:35	Welcome and Public Comments
7:35 – 7:50	Staff Consent items and EPC updates
7:50 – 8:00	Strategic Plan Process
8:00 – 8:20	Earth Day Report/EPC Activity (Natasha Andersen)
8:20 – 8:40	Budget Guidance to Council (Jim Kapsis)
8:40 – 9:00	Urban Forestry Letter to Council (Susan Gitlin)
9:00 – 9:20	Old Town North SAP Eco-District Letter (Scott Barstow)
9:20 – 9:25	Agenda for next Work Session and full meeting
9:30	Adjourn

Environmental Policy Commission April 4, 2016 Meeting Consent Item Reports

Staff Report- March 31, 2016/Prepared by Lisa Goldberg

Staff is updating the Environmental Action Plan Matrix; includes all 353 actions stipulated in the EAP.

Staff is scheduled to present an overview of the Eco-City Alexandria Initiative and the Environmental Action Plan 2030 at the Barrett Library on April 2, 11 AM – 12 PM.

City Council voted to formally reconstitute the Ad Hoc Underground Transmission Line Working Group at the March 29 Council meeting. The first Group meeting is tentatively scheduled for the end of April.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors in collaboration with the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), and the COG Board's Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) is developing an action plan for the region to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across all sectors to support COG's goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. A technical level working group composed of local, state and regional agency staff called the Multi-Sector Working Group (MSWG) have been working on developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Bill Skrabak represents the City in this working group. City staff is currently responding to a comprehensive questionnaire to support this effort.

The 28th Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup is scheduled for April 16. The City's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) Stormwater Management Division and Resource Recovery Division, in conjunction with the Alice Ferguson Foundation will host two sites in the City:

- Four Mile Run Park at the end of 3700 Commonwealth Avenue
- Historic Holmes Run at Beatley Central Branch Library in All Veterans Park

Volunteers need to RSVP to Sara DeGroot at sara.degroot@alexandriava.gov.

Earth Day Planning Committee by Natasha Garcia Andersen

The event is scheduled for Saturday, April 30th from 10am to 2pm at the Lenny Harris Fields aka: GW Middle School. We have a little over 40 exhibitors for the event and 5 food vendors. We have lots of space and options for people to be involved. The Committee conducted a site visit last week with city staff and have a layout for the stage, food, talks, and exhibits. **We need to increase volunteer signups. To volunteer, go to the Earth Day website to sign-up.** We have several sponsors this year. Virginia Paving, Alex Renew, and Dominion are the big ones and will be featured on the t-shirts. Others include Renewable Energy Corporation, Goodwill Car Donations, Mabbett & Associates, Water Environment Foundation and Alexandria Toyota.

Board and Commission Training/Prepared by Vice-Chair, Susan Gitlin

On February 29, City staff hosted training for board and commission members. This will be an annual event. Susan Gitlin attended the training, and recommends it for all commissioners. It provides helpful information on the rules and expectations for meetings and communications, as well as a chance to ask questions of staff responsible for ensuring that the commissions and boards run smoothly. Of note was the requirement that we use parliamentary procedure in all of our in-person meetings and that our emails could be construed as "meetings." With respect to the latter, courts have found that email communications can be considered meetings; the determination is based on the number of people in the discussion and the interval of time between communications. (If I send out a note to a few members, and a rapid-fire discussion ensues – that's a meeting. If I send out a message, and a message or two trickle back over the following days or weeks, apparently that would NOT be a meeting.) Commissioners can be FOIA'ed, City staff suggests that we create new email accounts to use for our commission communications.

Date: March 31, 2016

To: EPC Members:

From: Steve Milone

Two items for action as desired –

1. I could use a substitute to stand in for EPC at what will likely be the last PYMIG meeting on 4/7/2016 at 7 PM at Charles Houston Recreation Center meeting room. I will be on work travel overseas for work travel. If you are able and interested, please let me know.
2. If you want to weigh in on your thoughts regarding the future Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, Provide input by 11:59 PM Sunday, 4/4/2016 through the following link:
http://engage.alexandriava.gov/portals/191/Forum_537/Issue_3512?cookies=detect

Here are some updates regarding the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and the Combined Sewer System Outfall meetings that I have been attending as EPC's representative.

PYMIG – Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Implementation Work Group

Main info webpage: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/PotomacMetroWorkGroup>

Summary: Station design has been progressing in concept and with some detail and is slated to proceed to Planning Commission and City Council Development Special Use Permit review and approval later this spring. No discussion yet (permitted) of wetlands and natural resource restoration until after the EIS is released, after which City staff will discuss findings and desires with the National Park Service who will own the land to the east of the station after construction.

The meetings have dealt with the design and appearance of the station and the general configuration of the passive open spaces that will be modified to accommodate the new Metro entrances. The basic footprint and configuration of the station is dictated by the physical geometry of the site and WMATA requirements, and was determined by the selection of current Alternative. One factor about which I was not aware until recent meetings, is that the entire wetland area east of the station will be clear cut and filled with earth to use as a staging area, then excavated and reconstructed and planted as wetlands at the end of the construction.

Most of the meetings and discussion have surrounded consideration of materials and design to be employed in construction of the station. As it is currently progressing, the station will likely consist of a stone base, utilizing the gray/tan stone typically found along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, with a mainly glass pavilion at each end of the station, with an applied metal frame on the exterior to provide depth of detail and to reduce the reflectivity of the glass, all so that the station is attractive from the outside and so users can look out of the Metro into the natural setting of the GW Parkway. Current preliminary design proposed a more modern, rectilinear (box) glass pavilion along Potomac Avenue for the west entrance at E. Glebe Road.

Design of parks at Potomac Greens and Potomac Yard: East terminus of E. Glebe Road a flexible space with gentle stair steps that could be used for informal and formal gatherings - working details of bike ramp integration (north of SWM pond); for Potomac Greens little change from the current configuration

except for removal of parkland to accommodate the addition of a Metro access road (trying to make it look like a wide trail/sidewalk) and the pedestrian and bicycle entrances.

There will be a bike rack on Potomac Greens Drive east side entrance. On west side, bike facilities will be incorporated into the stair and elevator pavilion. No design or details yet provided.

Wetlands to be cleared and filled – I guesstimate approx. – 12 acre area of disturbance - then partially reconstructed - Final EIS still in work and City staff, Metro and consultants can't speak with NPS or us until after that is complete – which should be soon.

Combined Sewer System

City webpage: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Sewers>

Summary: Based on VA DEQ requirements and City desire to reduce the number and volume of sewer discharge to Hunting Creek, most immediately, and the Potomac River. Proposed to be address in phases over the next 20 years. The work group is meeting as a forum to discuss the issue and for the group to report with recommendations to City Council who will vote on way forward. Here is a very brief summary of the outfalls and possible recommended improvements.

1st CSO-003 & 004 to Hooff's Run – underground tunnel 10 ft dia and ½ mile from Duke St to the treatment plant over the next 10 years to approx. 2025.

2nd CSO-002 S. Royal Street – Tank in the end of South Royal Street cul-de-sac or outfall at water's edge, Hunting Towers shore or NPS Jones Point property - 2030-35.

Contemplating CSO-001 Oronoco Bay outfall – 43% of CSO but not required to be addressed under current permit due Aug 23, 2016. Staff is discussing with the developer of RTN and including a condition that the developer not take any action that precludes addressing likely tank installation in the future, though many workgroup members would like to see the outfall addressed sooner while construction is taking place at RTN and throughout OTN.

EPC CALENDAR - FY2016

July 2015 through June 2016

Conference Room 2000 at City Hall Unless Noted Otherwise
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

DATE	EVENT	AGENDA ITEMS	ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
7-6-2015	Work Session		
7-20	Regular Meeting	•	•
8-??	EPC Picnic/ Retreat		•
9-14	Work Session	EAP Indicators	•
9-28	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solarize Alexandria, Bill Eger • Update on the Eisenhower West SAP – Radhika, P&Z • Presentation on West End Transit Way, Allan Fye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget letter to City Council • Solarize (Bill Eger)
10-5	Work Session	Green Infrastructure	Seth Green
10-19	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth Day Planning • Memo to Council: Sustainability Coordinator • Work Session on Green Infrastructure 	• Budget
11-2	Work Session	Urban Forestry	•
11-16	Regular Meeting	Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, Steve Sindiong	•
12-21	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Letter • Memo to Council: Sustainability Coordinator 	• Indicators

DATE	EVENT	AGENDA ITEMS	ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
1-4-2016	Work Session	Environmental Indicators	
1-25 resched: 2-8	Regular Meeting	Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Report, Michael Clem	Fitzgerald Square Indicators Sustainability Coord. Workshop Memo.
2-22	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators Budget Resource Recovery Followup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
3-7	Work Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Guidelines/Urban Forestry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
3-21	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitzgerald Square Proposal, Tony Gammon, Deputy Director, Dept. Project Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earth Day Report/EPC Activity Indicators
4-4	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Old Town North Strategic Plan Urban Forestry Letter 	
4-18	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on the CSO Program, Erin Bevis-Carver Sanitary Sewer Lead, T&ES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earth Day Report/EPC Activity Indicators
5-2	Work Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
5-16	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
6-6	Work Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
6-20	Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater Management, Jesse Maines Green Building Update, Planning and Zoning EPC elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY2016 Annual Report and Member Attendance Report

DATE:

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR and MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM: THE PLANNING COMMISSION
THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
THE ALEXANDRIA BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION
THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMISSION**

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN AND THE
URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

We are writing to request your support for the implementation of goals contained in two documents that you adopted in 2009: the *Environmental Action Plan* (EAP) and the *Urban Forestry Master Plan* (UFMP). The UFMP and EAP are excellent resources that reflect extensive research, expertise, and thoughtful input from the Alexandria citizenry and City staff. We seek to increase the implementation of the goals that they contain, particularly those that address:

- Sustaining and enhancing the City's tree canopy coverage and
- Promoting the use of vegetation that provides the greatest benefits to our environment.

Specifically, we are requesting that City Council establish a work group consisting of members from multiple commissions and an inter-departmental staff team to review, update and recommend steps for implementing a key set of goals, policies, and strategies included in the EAP and UFMP. This work group would provide essential input to, among other things, initiatives on the City's proposed Long Range Work Plan for FY17 and FY18, including "Open Space in New Development" and "Landscape Guidelines Update Implementing Urban Forestry Master Plan." We fully support the City's plans to take up those initiatives, but believe it necessary to first revisit the goals in the UFMP and EAP and to provide alignment with the City's current organizational, budgetary, and environmental needs and conditions.

BACKGROUND

The state of the City's trees and other plants in its urban forest is of great importance to the citizens of Alexandria. These unsung heroes often are taken for granted, yet they offer innumerable, cross-cutting benefits:

- Their leaves, bark, and blossoms bring beauty to our streets, parks and public places.
- They provide homes and food for our birds, squirrels, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife.
- Their canopies and roots absorb enormous quantities of rainwater – preventing the creation of stormwater runoff that we would otherwise have to manage.
- Their shade protects us from the sun and reduces the energy required to cool buildings.
- They sequester carbon and remove pollutants from the air and from stormwater.
- They are essential to our lives and our ecosystems, and contribute mightily to our bottom line: our UFMP calculated their value at over \$4 million annually.

Since adoption of the EAP and UFMP, the City's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department (RPCA) has initiated many efforts that improve the extent and health of our trees. Examples include shifting toward a pro-active approach to tree maintenance; initiating an inventory of all trees along City streets and at public facilities; expanding the invasive plant control program; and, thanks to City Council, investing in additional tree care and plantings through a capital improvement program.

Nevertheless, if the City is to achieve the goals in the EAP and UFMP, it will need to address some challenges and obstacles to implementing those two plans. For example:

- A recent three-year baseline study of the City's tree canopy by RPCA's Urban Forestry Section and T&ES's GIS Division measured Alexandria's tree canopy at 34% (which means that Alexandria falls short of the UFMP goal of 40% by 20,000 oak trees or 101,000 crape myrtles).¹
- Growth and re-development place extreme pressure on both the health of our trees and the percent of canopy cover.
- The City's *Landscape Guidelines* are important in the review processes for applicants seeking approval of site plans and special use permits. They were last updated in 2007, and do not reflect the recommendations contained in the EAP and UFMP, which were published two years later. Areas in need of revision include deletion of any plants that are known to be environmentally harmful ("invasive") in our area, addition of requirements for care and maintenance during a two- or three-year establishment period for all new plants, an increased emphasis on the use of plants that are native to this area, and a reevaluation of the crown coverage allowances (CCA).²

¹ Estimates of tree quantities are based on tree canopy coverage allowances provided in the City's Landscape Guidelines (see next footnote).

² Trees and shrubs are assigned to a CCA group based on the typical canopy size of the particular species at maturity in an urban environment. Planning and Zoning uses these allowances to determine the projected canopy cover of a landscape plan submitted for review. However, as City staff has noted, the CCAs are overly optimistic; they over-project the square footage of canopy cover that a tree ultimately will provide. This is particularly problematic in view of the City's desire to achieve a 40% canopy cover: 90% of Alexandria's urban forest is located on private property or property not under direct control of the City (See UFMP), where we continually experience the greatest loss of canopy. Given that we require that site plans under review demonstrate a projected canopy coverage of only 25%, it is very important that we not overestimate the canopy that young trees will ultimately provide.

- Their implementation is dependent upon cooperation from a wide array of City departments. (Although measurement of our canopy is the responsibility of RPCA, many other departments throughout the City – from Planning and Zoning to General Services to Alexandria City Public Schools -- have roles with major implications for our canopy.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. City Council establish a nine (9) member work group to review, update, and recommend steps to implement goals and policies of the EAP and UFMP related to the City's tree canopy and plant selection. The proposed charge of this work group is to provide the City Manager with recommendations that would include, but not be implemented to:
 - Adjustments to the goals in the EAP and UFMP to reflect City organizational changes and new information made available since 2009.³
 - Revisions to make to the City's Landscape Guidelines to align it with the EAP and UFMP goals.
 - Policies, programs, public-private partnerships and future capital and operating budget needs to help implement the EAP and UFMP goals.

Pursuant to City Code Section 2.4.8, the initial term of this temporary work group will be for one year from the date of its initial meeting. If necessary, City Council can extend the term for up to two additional years. It is recommended that the work group be directed to begin its efforts in spring of calendar year 2016 and complete its recommendations to the City Manager by the end of FY 2017.

2. City Council authorize the City Manager to appoint the nine members of the work group based on the following categories:
 - Two members representing the Environmental Policy Commission
 - One member representing the Park and Recreation Commission
 - One member representing the Alexandria Beautification Commission
 - One member representing the Planning Commission
 - One staff member representing Transportation & Environmental Services
 - Two staff member representing RPCA Park Planning and Park Operations
 - One staff member representing Planning and Zoning

³ See Attachment A for a list of the UFMP and EAP components that we recommend be the focus of this effort.

We thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have questions, please contact Susan Gitlin, Vice Chair, Environmental Policy Commission, at 703-819-8410 or smcg611@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Atkins
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

Jim Kapsis
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

Denise Tennant
Chair, Alexandria Beautification Commission

Maria Wasowski
Chair, Planning Commission

ATTACHMENT A:
RECOMMENDED FOCAL AREAS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN AND
THE URBAN FORESTRY MASTER PLAN

From the EAP, all in Principle 7: Land Use & Open Space, beginning on p.41:

Targets:

- 1) By 2015, ensure that all plantings on City property are non-invasive and incorporate native plants.
- 2) By 2020, achieve 40% tree canopy coverage.

Goal 3 actions (beginning on p. 44):

- 1) The City will lead by example by utilizing low impact landscape practices where possible, such as perennial and native plant species, rain gardens, reduced fertilizer and pesticide usage, and encouraging the removal of invasive species.
- 2) Set minimum standards for open space and green space in Small Area Plans and other City plans that can be met in part through green roofs, green decks over underground parking, or green surface lots.
- 3) Seek authority to require all new developments, including single family homes, to provide 40% crown coverage on site. Require no less than 40% crown cover when sites are developed or redeveloped, within these parameters:
 - When trees are cleared from a site, increase replacement requirement for removal of large caliper trees.
 - Change crown coverage assumptions in City requirements to reduce the credit allocated for younger, smaller trees.
 - Set a minimum amount of the total crown coverage to be achieved through on-site trees and require payment to Living Landscape Fund for failure to achieve full requirement.
- 4) By 2015, ensure that all plantings by Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Department (RPCA) are non-invasive, flood- and drought-tolerant, 80% perennial plants, and that native plants are used wherever possible.

From the UFMP:

Goal: Increase Alexandria's Tree Canopy, and its supporting recommendations, particularly:

Recommendation 1: Adopt American Forests' recommended tree canopy coverage goal of 40% and develop a citywide strategy to meet this goal.

Recommendation 5: Actively seek ways to increase Alexandria's tree canopy on private property.

Recommendation 9: Achieve and maintain a species diversity where no single genus comprises 15% and no single species comprises 5% of the total population.

Goal: Improve stream corridors and other natural areas through urban forest management, and its supporting recommendations, particularly:

Recommendation 28. Encourage the establishment and healthy growth of native tree species through planting and maintenance.

Recommendation 29. Control invasive plant species.

Goal: Strengthen Alexandria's ability to protect and increase its tree canopy as permitted by State and local regulation, and its supporting recommendations:

Recommendation 37. Evaluate, update, and enforce the City's existing rules and regulations.

Recommendation 38. Increase and maximize the amount of tree canopy coverage required for Development Special Use Permits.